

DAMASCUS TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes for November 4, 2024
7:00pm Regular Called Council Meeting

Council Members Present: Susan Coleman, Tom Hayes, Beaty Jackson, Robert Kemmerlin, and Jack McCrady

Absent: Charles Fields

Also Present: Katie Lamb, Mayor Chris Bell, Town Manager
 Shawna Cook, Town Treasurer Tuesday Pope, Town Clerk
 Kermit Turner, Police & Fire Chief Julie Kroll, Recreation Program Director

Mayor Lamb called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance; Ms. Coleman gave the invocation.

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the October 2, 2024, Emergency Special Called Council Meeting Minutes.

- Mr. Jackson made a motion to approve the October 2, 2024 Minutes, as presented. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (3-0-2, with Kemmerlin and McCrady abstaining).
*Mr. McCrady stated that he wasn't made aware of the Emergency Special Called Council Meeting.

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the October 21, 2024, Regular Called Council Meeting Minutes.

- Mr. McCrady made a motion to approve the Minutes, as presented. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Mayor Lamb asked for approval of the agenda.

- Mr. Hayes made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. McCrady 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Presentations:

1. Linda Austin, Executive Director of Hands and Feet Ministry, gave updates and information about the Sanctuary Rehabilitation Program (a step-down program for mothers working on substance abuse recovery), including building renovations are underway and they expect the facility to be ready in the Spring.

2. Backcountry Discovery Route Presentation: Tim James and Kirk Lakeman Backcountry Discovery Routes® (BDR®) is a 501c(3) non-profit organization that creates off-highway routes for adventure and dual-sport motorcycle travel. The organization's work includes promoting rider education and safety campaigns, driving a positive economic impact to rural communities, and encouraging responsible motorcycle travel in the backcountry. Through the careful investment of funds and working with land managers and other public benefit organizations, BDR seeks to keep remote roads open for motorcycling for generations to come. The Mid Atlantic Backcountry Discovery Route (MABDR) was established in 2017 and it starts in Damascus and ends at the New York/Pennsylvania border. There is a new southeast route that is going to start in the panhandle of Florida and end in Damascus. A documentary film will be released promoting the new route. After the flood, they saw that Damascus is in need, and presented the Town with a \$25,000 donation towards recovery efforts.

Committee Reports

Budget, Finance, and Administration:

Town Treasurer, Shawna Cook, submitted the following report for the previous month:

Real Estate & Personal Property Taxes: *The collection rate for 2024 first half Real Estate is at 81.51% and 2023 Personal Property is at 82.21%.*

Meals & Lodging Tax: *\$12,505.11 in Meal Taxes and \$9,949.94 in Lodging Taxes were collected for October 2024.*

<i>Town of Damascus Virginia Investment Pool (VIP)</i>	<i>Account Balance</i>	<i>FYTD Income</i>	<i>Inception Date</i>
<i>RESERVE FUND</i>	<i>\$60,389.70</i>	<i>\$1,055.61</i>	<i>08/11/2017</i>
<i>EARMARK POLICE VEHICLE</i>	<i>\$512.01</i>	<i>\$8.74</i>	<i>04/04/2018</i>
<i>SEWER FUND CD</i>	<i>\$29,356.35</i>	<i>\$513.21</i>	<i>11/26/2018</i>
<i>ANTHEM RECOVERY</i>	<i>\$49,063.45</i>	<i>\$857.62</i>	<i>12/21/2018</i>
<i>ADDITIONAL WORKING CAPITAL</i>	<i>\$207,114.72</i>	<i>\$3,620.38</i>	<i>08/08/2019</i>
<i>TRAIL DAYS RESERVE</i>	<i>\$8,325.39</i>	<i>\$145.57</i>	<i>05/14/2020</i>
<i>TOD ARPA 2021</i>	<i>\$518,773.97</i>	<i>\$10,090.32</i>	<i>06/29/2021</i>
<i>VIP Stable NAV Liquidity Pool</i>	<i>\$873,535.59</i>	<i>\$16,291.45</i>	

The balances shown below are from online banking:

Bank of Damascus:

General Fund: \$171,840.50

CDBG ARC Downtown: \$478.70

CDBG Program Income: \$13,548.82

ARPA: \$28,219.00

Damascus Endowment Fund: \$215,826.00

Total: \$429,913.02

Announcements:

- *I would like to please request a Council motion to open an account with the Virginia Investment Pool for the Damascus Endowment Fund money to capture interest on these funds. The current balance for the Damascus Endowment Fund is \$215,826.00. I would also like to request that the Council allow me to move \$214,826.00 to the new account, which will leave \$1,000 in the Damascus Endowment Fund account at the Bank of Damascus.*
 - Ms. Coleman made a motion to authorize the Treasurer to open an account with the Virginia Investment Pool for the Damascus Endowment Fund money and move all but \$1,000 into the new account so it can gain interest, as requested. Mr. McCrady 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- *I am requesting clarification that Council will allow me to move funds from the Virginia Investment Pool ARPA account to cover ARPA identified expenses and also allow me to move funds from the Virginia Investment Pool Working Capital account to cover non-Helene related expenses as needed. A motion may be needed if it pleases the Council.*
 - Mr. McCrady made a motion to authorize the Treasurer to move funds from the Virginia Investment Pool ARPA account to cover ARPA identified expenses and also allow her to move funds from the Virginia Investment Pool Working Capital account to cover non-Helene related expenses as needed. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
- *Personal Property Tax Relief remains at 60%. This calculation may need to be reviewed when the personal property tax rate is set again, as it exceeds the money designated to the Town by the State.*
- *I would like to offer information and request clarification regarding last month's motion to waive the penalty for 2024 first half real estate and 2023 personal property supplement billing, as well as interest. Interest on tax bills is processed in batches. For personal property, interest is accrued on all unpaid bills from 2020 forward, which is processed as a single batch in Accufund. Interest is compounded monthly. The estimated monthly interest is \$253.17. I have not included interest for 2023 personal property supplement bills, as it has to be processed in accounts receivable, and I have not received instructions from software support as to how to complete that process. Interest has not been processed since June, due to concerns with the software and correct application of interest to regular personal property without applying the interest at the wrong time to the 2023 personal property supplement bills. For real estate, interest is processed in a batch for all delinquencies for tax years 2005 to present. The estimated monthly interest for real estate is \$531.14 per month. Interest has not been processed on these bills since June 2024, due to the calculation issue*

with 2024 first half real estate penalty. Estimated interest calculations do not include any penalty on 2024 first half real estate or 2023 personal property supplements.

In the previous motion, no recommendation was made as to when it pleased the Council that I should restart application of interest to delinquent tax bills. Please consider a motion with a restart date for interest calculations to be processed and added to the delinquent personal property and real estate bills.

- Mr. McCrady made a motion that December 1, 2024 be the restart date for interest calculations to be processed and added to the delinquent personal property and real estate bills. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

- *Per the Code of Virginia §58.1-3703, the maximum business license fee is \$30 for a locality with a population smaller than 25,000. In 2024, with the help of our Town Attorney, Lucy Phillips, the business license application was changed to reflect the correct fee. There is also the matter of business license applicants who were charged \$50 as a minimum tax or as a new applicant under prior years' versions of the application, and were not charged a fee. Under the new corrected 2024 application, if the calculation of the applicable tax rate to the gross receipts results in total sum of \$50 or less, the tax is waived and the applicant pays only the \$30 license fee.*
Corrections were made for individuals who submitted older versions of the form in 2024. The Code of Virginia §58.1-3981(A) authorizes the Treasurer to issue refunds due to erroneous assessments. There is a three-year time limit for corrections. Guidance regarding this information and the Code was provided by the Town Attorney.
The recommendation is a refund of \$20 per affected business license applicant per applicable year for 2021-2023. The total estimated amount of refunds is \$3,500. I am requesting a Council motion to approve the amount for the refunds so that the checks may be issued as a single batch, maximizing efficiency, simplifying data that must be retained and minimizing check and postage costs.

- Mr. McCrady made a motion to authorize the refund of \$20 per affected business license applicant per applicable year for 2021-2023, approximately \$3,500 total, as recommended. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

- Employee Christmas Bonuses
 - Mr. McCrady made a motion match the 2023 employee Christmas bonuses (\$500 for full-time, and \$250 for part-time employees). Mr. Hayes 2nd the motion, which passed (4-0-1, with Mr. Kemmerlin abstaining).

- Additional employee paid time off in between the Christmas and New Year holidays (Dec. 26, 27, 30, and 31)

- Mr. McCrady made a motion to approve the four additional employee paid holiday days, as presented. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (4-0-1, with Mr. Kemmerlin abstaining).
- Employee vacation carry-over – possible extension for carry-over beyond December 31st
- Mr. McCrady made a motion to extend the employee vacation carry-over timeframe until March 31st, at which time it can be revisited if needed. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (4-0-1, with Mr. Kemmerlin abstaining).

Streets, Lights and Maintenance:

Mr. Kemmerlin reported the maintenance crew has been busy with clean-up efforts, hanging flags for Veterans Day, etc, and leaf pick-up will begin soon. The Fire Department has been burning piles of vegetative storm debris at the previous IDA property, and that will continue as needed. We are now helping to store some of the storm debris at the previous dog park location from the Taylors Valley area until they can get it to the disposed of. A hazardous waste disposal set-up is located behind Souls Harbor church on S. Shady Ave.

Parks and Recreation:

1. Seat vacancy – Mr. Jackson said there is a possible interested person, and he will pursue.
 2. Contra dance update: Our first eight Trail Town Twirl contra dances have been organized with Warren Doyle's help. He stepped down as the event organizer after the September dance so he can move on to new projects, but Diane Blanken, a regular attendee, would like to take over. Organizing the event includes the following - booking the dance caller, music, and sound, collecting cash donations at the door to turn into the Town, and locking the Rock School Auditorium after the event. The Town has budgeted \$500 per contra dance for this fiscal year and collects donations at the door to help offset costs, which is a norm for contra dances across the region.
- * Mr. Jackson made a motion to approve Diane Blanken as the contra dance organizer on first Saturdays quarterly for the remainder of the fiscal year as budgeted, on December 7, March 1, and June 7. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0)
3. Mr. Jackson reported that we have someone interested in the 2025 pool manager position, and they have submitted their application for consideration.
 4. Also, the Appalachian Trail Days Festival will happen as usual in 2025.

Planning Commission:

Nothing at this time.

Police and Fire Advisory:

Chief Turner presented the following report for the previous month:

Operations:

October 2024, Damascus Officers had 103 calls for service. We have taken 6 investigative reports and made 3 arrests. We had 2 reportable accidents.

Arrests are as follows: Intoxicated in Public 1, Assault on LEO/Resisting Arrest/False Information 1 and Juvenile arrest 1.

Traffic Enforcement Activities:

We issued 5 citations along with 13 warnings. The Speeding violations were 25 mph zone 2, 35 mph zone 0, Reckless by Speed 2 and Leave the Scene of an Accident 1.

Speeding complaint areas include: *Nothing New Currently.*

Special Report: *Nothing New Currently.*

Special Notes:

The LPR Camera system has been installed and has completed the training for the system. I am currently working on the policy and procedure for the use of the system.

Police Vehicles:

Both vehicles have been serviced and while doing so there was minor damage to the bottom of the plastic pan of Officer Price's vehicle and it has been repaired. On the F-150 there was flood debris that was located around the oil filter, and it has been removed. Both vehicles have been cleared.

Auxiliary: *Nothing new currently.*

Accidents Successfully Exported To TREDS

Damascus Police Department

(10/01/2024 - 10/31/2024)

Submission Date:	Accident Number:	TREDS Number:	Resubmission?
10/22/2024 - 16:00	24-00014	242965333	No
10/19/2024 - 18:58	24-00013	242935256	No

Total Successful Exports: 2

Total Accidents Successfully Exported: 2

Arrest Race/Sex Totals by Offense

Damascus Police Department

(10/01/2024 - 10/31/2024)

Primary Offense:	White Male:	Black Male:	Indian Male:	Asian/ Pac. Isl. Male:	White Female:	Black Female:	Indian Female:	Asian/ Pac. Isl. Female:	Juven.:	Adult:	Resd.:	NonRes.:	Arrests:
90Z - All Other Offenses	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2
Totals:	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2

Citation Totals by Charge

Damascus Police Department

(10/01/2024 - 10/31/2024)

Charge:	Number of Charges:
46.2-862 - RECKLESS DRIVING (SPEED) 20 OVER 25 OVER IN 35 ZONE	2
46.2-874 - SPEEDING 25 MPH ZONE	2
46.2-896 - leave scene of accident w/unattended property damage	1
Total:	5

Incident Case Status Totals by Offense

Damascus Police Department

(10/01/2024 - 10/31/2024)

Offense:	Active:	Active TOT O/A:	Inactive:	Inactive WOF:	Closed Service:	Closed Except.:	Closed Arrest:	Adult Arrest:	Juvenile Arrest:	Adu./Juv. Arrest:	Unfld.:	Rptd.:	Actual:
13B - Simple Assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
23H - All Other Larceny	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
90Z - All Other Offenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	4	4
Totals:	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	6	6

Damascus Volunteer Fire Department

Chief Turner presented the following report for the previous month's activities:

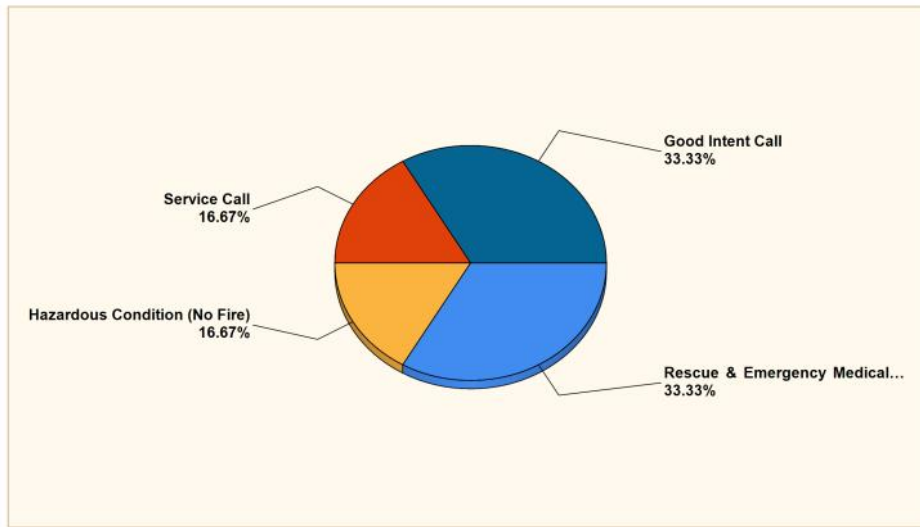
Damascus Fire Department

Damascus, VA

This report was generated on 11/1/2024 1:39:52 PM

Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 10/01/2024 | End Date: 10/31/2024

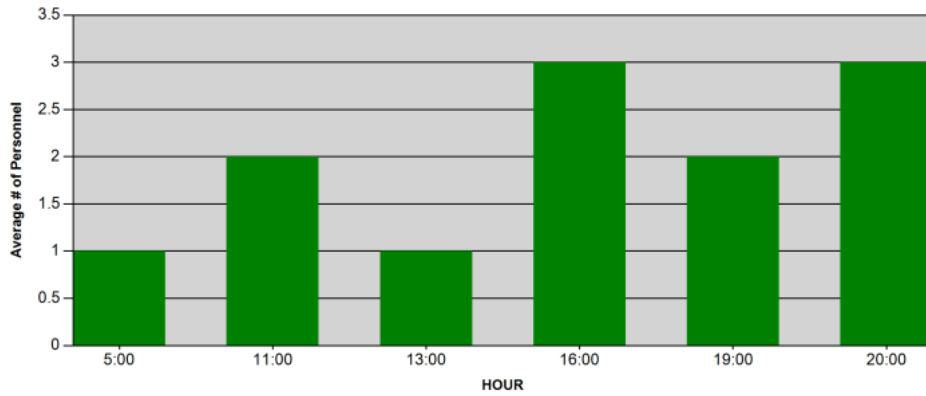


MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	2	33.33%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	1	16.67%
Service Call	1	16.67%
Good Intent Call	2	33.33%
TOTAL	6	100%

* Chief Turner stated this report is incorrect, and there were actually 13 calls for service in October.

Average Number of Responding Personnel per Hour for Date Range

Start Date: 10/01/2024 | End Date: 10/31/2024



HOUR	AVG. # PERSONNEL
05:00 - 05:59	1.00
11:00 - 11:59	2.00
13:00 - 13:59	1.00
16:00 - 16:59	3.00
19:00 - 19:59	2.00
20:00 - 20:59	3.00

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	2	33.33%
460 - Accident, potential accident, other	1	16.67%
520 - Water problem, other	1	16.67%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	2	33.33%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	6	100%

Incident Statistics

Zone(s): All Zones | Start Date: 10/01/2024 | End Date: 10/31/2024

INCIDENT COUNT			
INCIDENT TYPE		# INCIDENTS	
EMS		2	
FIRE		4	
TOTAL		6	
TOTAL TRANSPORTS (N2 and N3)			
APPARATUS	# of APPARATUS TRANSPORTS	# of PATIENT TRANSPORTS	TOTAL # of PATIENT CONTACTS
TOTAL			
PRE-INCIDENT VALUE		LOSSES	
\$0.00		\$0.00	
CO CHECKS			
TOTAL			
MUTUAL AID			
Aid Type		Total	
OVERLAPPING CALLS			
# OVERLAPPING		% OVERLAPPING	
0		0	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME (Dispatch to Arrival)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:11:45	0:05:08	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:09:33	
LIGHTS AND SIREN - AVERAGE TURNOUT TIME (Dispatch to Enroute)			
Station	EMS	FIRE	
Station 1400	0:04:30	0:03:24	
AVERAGE FOR ALL CALLS		0:04:08	
AGENCY		AVERAGE TIME ON SCENE (MM:SS)	
Damascus Fire Department		27:56	

Personnel Hours for Incidents for Date Range (Not Payroll Related)

Start Date: 10/01/2024 | End Date: 10/31/2024

PERSONNEL	TIME SPENT ON INCIDENTS (Hours:Minutes Dispatched to Cleared Scene)
Doss, Brady	0:13
Hicks, Mindi	0:21
Hicks, Noah	1:06
Johnson, Michael	1:51
Richey, Jordan	1:17
Turner, Kermit	1:17
Turner, Walter B	1:19
Total:	7:24

Response Percentage per Station per Personnel for Incident Types for Personnel

Personnel: All Personnel | Incident Type(s): All Incident Types | Start Date: 10/01/2024 | End Date: 10/31/2024

Personnel	Calls Attended	% of Calls for Selected Incident Types
Station: Station 1400		
Doss, Brady	1	16.7%
Hicks, Emilee	1	16.7%
Hicks, Mindi	2	33.3%
Hicks, Noah	1	16.7%
Johnson, Michael	6	100.0%
Jones, Dave	1	16.7%
Richey, Jordan	3	50.0%
Turner, Kermit	2	33.3%
Turner, Walter B	2	33.3%
Widener, Alex	2	33.3%
Widener, Candace	2	33.3%
Total Incidents for Station Station 1400	6	

Total Incidents for all Stations 6

Code Enforcement:

Mayor Lamb presented the following activity report for the previous month from the Town's Code Enforcement Officer, Marty Berry:

Visits and Contacts: 17

Zoning: 10

Business License: 0

Lodging: 0

Meals: 0

Complaints and Investigations: 2

Assist P.D.: 6 days which consisted of some of the following.

Security for Gov. Youngkin and V.P. candidate Vance.

Patrolled flood damaged areas of town.

Checked on displaced residence living in tents and campers.

Patrolled dog park for treasure hunters. Watched and keep people from trespassing trestle #17.

Worked traffic detail location, directed traffic.

Keep check of houses that had been confirmed as damaged and marked by county building Inspector.

Special Committees

Nothing at this time.

Citizens Comments

Pat McCartin, E. Laurel Ave., stated that the newly installed FLOCK safety camera system that has been installed by the Police Dept. is a 4th Amendment violation and needs to be very heavily regulated, if not removed. He referenced a suit against Norfolk for their use of this system.

Tom Foltz, Bowlin St., thanked the Town Manager, Mayor, Council, first responders, and volunteers for doing such a tremendous job repairing the Town after the flood. He thanked the BDR organization for their generous donation. Also, the VFW has decided to sell their property, which borders the previous IDA property that is owned by the Town on Mtn. City Rd., and he wanted to make the Town Council aware in case they are interested in purchasing it.

Manager's Report

Chris Bell presented the following Manager's Report for the previous month:

Creep Trail

- *Trail Closed: Governor's task force continues to work on damage assessment and documentation collection in order to develop a detailed map of damage, ownership, and additional information for Congressional review & FEMA public assistance for localities and services. The USFS is actively monitoring the Trestle 17 piers with geo-monitoring devices for additional slumping activity. Engineers will continue to monitor and report any additional movement in order for the USFS to make a determination on next steps.*

Town Hall

- *Belfor has completed remediation work and invoiced for work. Belfor generating scope of work and a cost estimate to repair town hall. Working with FEMA mitigation team to consider floodproofing elements. An invitation to bid will be advertised once scope is complete which will include original renovation project scope of ADA accessibility and emergency egress.*

Temporary Town Hall

- *Security camera and phone system installation to commence this week*

FEMA

- *Request for public assistance submitted Oct. 25th, waiting on VDEM approval and assignment of PDMG to Damascus.*
- *Initial damage inventory list prepared for FEMA (refer to pages 3-4)*
- *Collection and organization of event, debris removal, and damage images in progress. Crowd sourcing of specific project related images to follow.*
- *FEMA specific time sheet template distributed to staff to capture any labor associated with the storm*

- *FEMA specific volunteer donated resource sheet template created to capture donated time and equipment*
- *FEMA Hazard Mitigation Director arranging site survey for substantial damage assessment with Floodplain management team and our CFM*
- *VDEM recommended requesting public assistance from NRCS regarding waterway debris and management. Application completed, site survey scheduled Nov. 6th.*

Damascus Strong Fund as of Oct. 31, 2024

- *Creeper Trail Restoration / Maintenance – Approx. \$18,594.00*
- *Downtown Restoration / Beautification - \$8,754.00*
- *Emergency Services - \$28,313.00*
- *Undesignated – \$160,164.00*

- *Recommendation to form a 5-person committee (refer to page 5) with Town Treasurer and Manager as advisors (The proposed committee consists of Gene Copenhaver, Mark Graham, Kerry Guest, Tonya Triplett, and John Whitesides.)*

Ms. Coleman questioned the legality of the way the fund is set up.

Mr. Jackson questioned how it would be set-up and believes there should be Council representation on the committee.

Mr. McCrady stated that the Council wasn't asked to submit names for consideration on the committee, and he doesn't see why the Council, with legal guidance, shouldn't be the ones to set the parameters and decide how the funds should be allocated.

Mr. Kemmerlin agreed with the way the committee was put together because all proposed members are knowledgeable in finance and other areas and are independent of a political office.

- * *It was the consensus of the Council to hold a Special Called Council Meeting on November 14th at 6pm to discuss the fund's proposed committee further.*

IT – Higher Ground

- *Laurel Creek electronic lock installation scheduled this week*
- *Cancellation of Point Broadband internet service at satellite town locations*
- *Awaiting equipment for implementation of Wi-Fi at pool and along Laurel Ave.*

Engineering

- *Completed debris removal and waterway site survey with Army Corps of Engineering last week*
- *VDOT re-inspected Laurel Creek bridge and determined bridge is structurally sound*
- *Scheduling meeting with VDOT to review Rt. 58/Laurel Ave storm water drainage concerns and McGill preliminary calculations*
- *Legion St. parking project on hold*

DOF Urban & Community Forestry – Julie Kroll presented

Dept. of Forestry grant: The Town received a grant award (\$62,000) in February 2024 from the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF). There is no match for this grant; \$60,000 will be spent on the removal of identified hazard trees, and \$2,000 on continuing to strategically replant new trees. Due to the recent storm damage from Hurricane Helene and an updated town-wide hazard tree assessment by VDOF staff, VDOF amended the award with a \$50,000 increase toward hazard tree removal. This gives us a total of \$99,750 in grant funds for hazard tree removal, after two prior reimbursements.

VDOF also deployed an Urban Forest Strike Team (UFST) in late October for a post-storm hazard tree assessment. The team identified 113 tree removals and 3 prunes, plus 18 removals and 1 prune that qualify for FEMA assistance, for a total of 131 tree removals, which is net +24 from the previous assessment included in the ITB. The identified trees are mapped in GIS for use by a contractor. (See pages 6 & 7)

The council is requested to accept the VDOF award increase of \$50,000 and authorize the Town Manager to negotiate and sign a contract from ITB-2024-01 based on the updated hazard tree assessment conducted by VDOF staff on October 24.

- Mr. McCrady made a motion to accept the VDOF award increase of \$50,000 and authorize the Town Manager to negotiate and sign a contract from ITB-2024-01 based on the updated hazard tree assessment conducted by VDOF staff on October 24. Mr. Jackson 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Miscellaneous

- *Recodification: No update*
- *Gap Analysis + Feasibility Study: Meeting on 11/13/24 with Wellspring to discuss re-allocation of funds.*
- *Laurel Creek Trail: Awaiting VDOT approval of restoring parking spaces along N. & S. Reynolds street.*

Legal Matters

At the appropriate time, motion to Recess into Closed Session for Discussion and Consideration of Public Works Personnel Matters, per VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1); and Discussion and Consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, per VA Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (3).

Old Business

1. Tree Removal Project Bids – Contractor selection (covered in the Manager's report)
2. Town Hall renovation – on hold
3. Damascus Health Center Commission: 2 seat vacancies
4. Mr. Bell stated that on April 3, 2023, the Town entered into a MOU with the VA Creeper Trail Conservancy to appropriate \$262,000 towards substantial reconstruction for trestle 30 using the Town's ARPA funds (\$100,000 of which was paid to the conservancy immediately). Post the Hurricane Helene flood, the Council needs to look to reallocate those funds elsewhere.

New Business

- 1st reading of a proposed Virginia Creeper Trail e-bike amendment – Mayor Lamb

***BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that upon the recommendation of the Council for the Town of Damascus Code, Chapter 50. Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Property. Article VI. Virginia Creeper Trail Use be repealed, amended, and reenacted as follows:*

Sec. 50-181. - Use by public.

The trail as set forth in [section 50-176](#) is established for the use of the general public provided that the limitations and regulations established in this article are observed by all users.

(Ord. of 3-6-1984, § II-1)

Sec. 50-182. - Regulations.

(a) There shall be no motorized vehicles allowed upon the trail as set forth in [section 50-176](#) with the following exceptions:

- (1) Vehicles belonging to the Town of Abingdon and the town and the county, their successors and assigns, as may be necessary for law enforcement, maintenance, or other official and authorized use.
- (2) Persons owning lands adjacent to such trail who may have need to cross such trail from time to time. Such exemption shall be limited to periodic crossing and use of the trail only by such persons and not for travel upon such trail.
- (3) Electrically powered wheelchairs operated by handicapped persons at their own risk.
- (4) Electric Power-Assisted Bicycles are permitted on the Virginia Creeper Trail.

(b) No firearms shall be carried, exhibited, or used upon such trail.

(c) No alcoholic beverages shall be carried, exhibited, or consumed upon such trail.

(d) Camping on the trail shall be allowed only in areas of such trail as shall be designated by an appropriate sign or marker.

(Ord. of 3-6-1984, § III-1)

Consent Agenda

- Mr. McCrady made a motion to pay the bills for invoices exceeding \$2,500, 2nd by Mr. Jackson. The motion passed (5-0).
- Mr. Jackson made a motion to pay the bills presented as well as the standard and/or recurring bills that will come in before the next Council meeting. Mr. Kemmerlin 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Mayor & Council Members Reports

Mayor Lamb thanked everyone for their patience and for banding together as a community to keep our town going.

Mr. Jackson stated that we have an opportunity to rebuild a town centered around the community and with activities that are not solely centered around the Creeper Trail.

Mr. Kemmerlin requested authorization to rent the skid steer for another week to continue assisting with the additional storm debris, to be reimbursed by FEMA. He also encouraged residents to reach out to Council members with any questions or concerns they have about something. Communication is key, and everyone needs to come together as a town to move forward.

- Mr. Kemmerlin made a motion to rent the skid steer for another week to continue assisting with the additional storm debris, to be reimbursed by FEMA. Ms. Coleman 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).

Mr. McCrady stated that, as part of the Washington County Veterans Park Foundation, he is going to distribute envelopes with information about donating to the 'Damascus Strong' endowment fund during the Veterans Day event. There should be a sizeable crowd, and hopefully will raise some funds.

Announcements

UPCOMING EVENTS & OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- November 5th – Town Hall CLOSED for Election Day (GO VOTE!)
- November 11th – Town Hall CLOSED for Veterans Day
- November 27th half day, 28th, and 29th - Town Hall CLOSED for Thanksgiving
- The next Regular Called Council Meeting will be held on December 2nd, at the Rock School Auditorium, 6pm

- *For information on upcoming events, go to our website visitdamascus.org. For citizen info go to damascus.org, and don't forget our social media presence on **Facebook** and **Instagram**!*
- Ms. Coleman made a motion to Recess into Closed Session for Discussion and Consideration of the items specified under Legal Matters. Mr. Hayes 2nd the motion, which passed (5-0).
 - Mr. Jackson made a motion to return to Open Session, 2nd by Ms. Coleman. The motion passed (5-0).
 - *CERTIFY (individually): We Certify that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such matters identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting.*
 - Susan Coleman – Yea
 - Tom Hayes– Yea
 - Beaty Jackson – Yea
 - Robert Kemmerlin - Yea
 - Jack McCrady - Yea
 - Mr. McCrady made a motion to adjourn, 2nd by Mr. Jackson. The motion passed (5-0).